

WORKSHOP PREPARATION

Workshop participants will need to prepare the following swatches and should have them completed for the first session of the workshop. It is essential that the swatches be worked by hand with the yarn described and according to the stitch and row counts indicated, and that they be washed and blocked according to the directions below. These swatches will be used during the workshop as a basis for discussion and for the construction and finishing techniques that are the focus of the skill acquisition. Please bring the additional yarns and notions listed to the workshop along with the completed swatches.

Please read the list of required skills and techniques on page 5 carefully. They derive from traditional hand-knitting practice and you will be expected to be familiar with them and able to execute them when necessary and without instruction during the class sessions.

One technique essential to the preparation of the swatches is the practice of marking stitches. You may not be familiar with this practice; the directions are found on page 4. The swatches are extremely simple and the directions straight-forward; please feel free to contact me (catherine@catherine-lowel.com) if you have any questions about the preparation or the yarns and notions required for the workshop.

MATERIALS

yarn:

- A (used for the swatches):** approximately 100 yds/91 m of a light colored dk weight wool with crisp stitch definition that knits to the gauge noted below for yarns A and B.
- B (to be used in the class):** 20–25 yds/18–23 m of the same yarn as A, but in a color that contrasts with yarn A. This yarn should not be so dark that it is difficult to read the stitches.
- C (to be used in the class):** 10–15 yds/9–14 m of a fingering weight wool in a color and hand comparable to yarn B that knits at the gauge noted below for yarn C.

needles:

- 32"/80 cm circular needles in the size used to work the swatches. For most knitters this will usually be a 6 or 5 US/4 mm or 3.75 mm needle; however, use whatever size needle is needed to obtain the gauge.
- 32"/80 cm circular needles in 1, 2, 3 and 4 sizes smaller than used to work the swatches.
- 32"/80 cm circular needles in 1 size larger than used to work the swatches.

32"/80 cm circular needles in the size needed to obtain gauge for yarn C, if this size is not already included in those listed above.

0 US/2.0 mm: 2 32"/80 cm circular or 2 double point at least 8"/20 cm.

The length of the needles is important only insofar as a minimum of 24"/60 cm is necessary and you may find a longer needle more comfortable to work some of the techniques. During the workshop and at your discretion, you may opt not to work the technique sample that requires the needles 1, 2, 3, and 4 sizes smaller than the size used to work the swatches, thus eliminating the need for those needles, but you will still need the other needles listed above. In some instances, long double point needles may be substituted for the circular needles, if you are more comfortable working with a straight needle.

notions:

crochet hook: C/2.5 mm or D/3.0 mm

tapestry needle

scissors

Knit-Chek™, Addi turbo needle gauge, or other hard-edge ruler that measures an increment of 2"/4 cm

GAUGE

Yarns A and B: 6 stitches and 8 rows = 1"/2.5 cm

All of the swatches should be knit at this gauge.

Yarn C: 8 stitches and 10 rows = 1"/2.5 cm

Note that these are knitting gauges and not blocked or finished gauges. Please do not substitute lighter or heavier weight yarns.

SWATCHES

Swatches #1 and #2:

Work 2 identical swatches as follows.

With yarn A cast on 38 stitches using the same cast-on as for swatch #1. Mark the first and last stitches of the cast-on row. See the note below regarding marking stitches at the beginning and end of a row.

Row 1: (RS) purl first stitch (to establish beginning of row selvedge stitch); knit 36; knit 1 (to establish end of row selvedge stitch).

Mark the first and last stitches of row 1.

Row 2: (WS) with yarn in back of work, slip first stitch as if to knit (beginning of WS row selvedge stitch); purl 36; purl 1 (end of WS row selvedge stitch).

Row 3: (RS) with yarn in front of work, slip first stitch as if to purl through back of loop (beginning of RS row selvedge stitch); knit 36; knit 1 (end of RS row selvedge stitch).

Row 4: (WS) as row 2.

Repeat rows 3 and 2 to work the selvedge stitch pattern along the vertical edges of the stockinette stitch.

Work through row 46.

Row 47: (RS) work right side row as established.

Mark the first and last stitches of row 47.

Row 48: (WS) work wrong side row as established.

Mark the first and last stitches of row 48.

Row 49: (RS) bind off all stitches knitwise.

Before washing and blocking the swatches, carefully trace the outline of each swatch on graph paper, label the outlines, and bring them with you to the workshop.

Wash and block the swatches following the directions below.

Swatch #3:

With yarn A cast on 40 stitches using your regular cast-on. If you regularly vary your cast-on depending upon the stitch pattern to be worked, use the cast-on you would normally use for stockinette stitch.

Mark the second and next-to-last stitches of the cast-on row. See the directions below regarding marking stitches.

Row 1: (RS) knit 2 (to establish beginning of row selvedge stitches); knit 36; knit 2 (to establish end of row selvedge stitches).

Mark the second and next-to-last stitches of row 1.

Row 2: (WS) with yarn in back of work, slip first stitch as if to knit through back of loop, knit 1 (beginning of WS row selvedge stitches); purl 36; knit 2 (end of WS row selvedge stitches).

Row 3: (RS) with yarn in back of work, slip first stitch as if to knit through back of loop, knit 1 (beginning of RS row selvedge stitches); knit 36; knit 2 (end of RS row selvedge stitches).

Row 4: (WS) as row 2.

Repeat rows 3 and 2 to work the selvedge stitch pattern along the vertical edges of the stockinette stitch.

Work through row 46.

Row 47: (RS) work right side row as established.

Mark the second and next-to-last stitches of row 47.

Row 48: (WS) work wrong side row as established.

Mark the second and next-to-last stitches of row 48.

Row 49: (RS) bind off all stitches knitwise.

Before washing and blocking the swatch, carefully trace its outline on graph paper, label the outline, and bring it with you to the workshop.

Wash and block the swatch following the directions below.

TO WASH AND BLOCK THE SWATCHES

Wash the swatches as you normally would and using your regular cleaning agent for wool. Dry them flat, making sure that the corners are square and that the sides are parallel so that no bias is introduced into the knitted fabric. Do not stretch them or pin them on the blocking surface. Allow them to dry naturally and to achieve their finished shape and gauge without any manipulation on your part. When you store them once they are thoroughly dry, please do not press them down or fold them in any way that might affect or alter the shape and gauge they reached upon blocking. We will discuss at length how yarns respond to the process of washing and blocking; the individual results represented by these swatches will provide the starting point for this discussion.

MARKING STITCHES

The directions ask that certain stitches be marked; these stitches will be used in the classwork as points of reference. Use knitter's pins or other form of stitch marker that may be placed in the swatch as it is being knit and may remain in the swatch through the washing and blocking. Please do not use the locking plastic markers as they impinge on gauge and interfere with the techniques for which the swatches are used.

To mark a stitch, place the marker around the base of the stitch so as to encompass both sides of the loop and fall above the running thread on either side of this stitch. Do not put the marker through the loop of the stitch itself; it must sit above the running threads of the row in which the stitch is being marked.

Stitches should be marked after they have been formed and once the row has been completed. When marking a stitch at the beginning of a row, make sure that the marker hangs below and in front of the working yarn and that the working yarn does not form a knot around the marker when the first stitch of the next row is worked.

Because these markers indicate points of reference that will be used for the construction and finishing techniques, they must remain in the knitted fabric through the washing and blocking and until they have served their purpose.

REQUIRED SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

Students should be comfortable with the following:

- the structure of knitted fabric: understand how yarn moves through the fabric; be able to identify rows and columns of stitches; and be able to locate the running threads in a piece of knitted fabric
- stitch and row gauge: be able to determine these gauges accurately
- blocking wires: know what they are and how they are used

Students should be able to execute the following without needing instruction:

- knit long-tail cast-on
- knit and purl through the back loop of a stitch
- knit-up or pick up and knit stitches (same technique, different names)
- slip stitches, one or more at a time, through the front or back of the loop(s)
- knit and purl open running thread increases
- knit and purl raised and slip raised increases
- k2tog and ssk decreases
- knit and purl center double decreases
- yarnovers: from knit to knit, purl to purl, knit to purl, and purl to knit
- knit or purl into a yarnover without dropping the yarnover from the needle